

Echos of a Troubled Era

By Andreas Hendren

Prologue

I have always been interested in the British-Irish conflict, but I never thought I would be a part of it. Today was going as usual. I brushed my teeth, took a shower, and ate breakfast. It was cold today, so I wore some warm, thick clothes. Then everything went black.

Chapter 1

I was surrounded by scenery I didn't recognize when I woke up. When I stood up, my legs wobbled a little. I went to talk to a local and asked where I was. When they spoke, they had a thick Irish accent and were perplexed by the question. Finally, he told me we were in North Ireland in a state called Bessbrook in 1972. Luckily, I had my emergency survival kit on me. In my kit, I had a Glock 22, an AFAK, half a gallon of purified water, half a pound of beef jerky, a water purifier straw, a journal, a Berkut BB-102 18L, a sleeping bag, some painkillers, and heavy, warm, comfortable clothing. I started walking to the center of the town, and I came across a sign that said "SNIPER AT WORK." As I walked past the sign, I said, "That's comforting."

Chapter 2

As I walked into town, it looked like another world. There was sheet metal everywhere, and a car was upside down and on fire. Not to mention there were murals of the IRA everywhere. You could probably cut the tension in the air; it was so thick. As I made my way through the town, trying to blend in as much as I could, I walked by a large group of people outside of a pub. They were talking about recent events and the political situation. It was clear that the people here were living in constant fear.

Chapter 3

As it started getting dark, I couldn't shake the feeling of being out of place. As I saw the dark smoke of fire begin to rise, I began to realize the gravity of the situation I was in. I felt a shiver down my spine as I saw a pickup truck ride by with all masked men holding what looked like AK47s and FN FALs, along with numerous other firearms, and I knew they meant business. I felt the weight of my gun grow heavier as it got darker.

Chapter 4

I found an abandoned house on the outskirts of town as the sun fully set. When I walked in, it was very dark and dusty. I went to the bathroom, set up my sleeping bag, and got ready to go to bed. I chose the bathroom because it was the only room in the house that had a lock. As I took my last swig of water and had some beef jerky, I heard a floorboard creak. As I grabbed my Glock 22 and made sure that there was a round in the chamber, I heard footsteps approaching, and I aimed head-level. When I looked at the lock, I realized that I didn't lock the door. As the

door opened, I saw a young boy way below head level. As I took my finger off the trigger, he gasped, put his hands up, and said, "Don't shoot, mister." I motioned for him to put his hands down and be quiet. "Did anyone follow you here?" I said. He seemed a little off-put by my accent, then said, "No, I just wanted to explore." He seemed like he was telling the truth, so I told him not to say anything to anyone, and he agreed. I made sure to watch him run back to town and stayed on guard until I thought it was safe. I then went back to the bathroom, made sure to use the lock, and drifted off to sleep.

Chapter 5

When I wake up, I feel relief that I'm safe, but I still feel a sense of unease. As I eat breakfast I look out the window facing town just to see what's going on. Right as I'm halfway through my meal I see 2 armored vehicles drive into town. As I make my way to the town I hear the explosion of gunfire. I run my way to town, and I see the boy who previously scared me injured. "Hey, are you okay?" "Yeah a piece of metal got lodged in my leg," he says in pain. I give him one of my painkillers to help subside the pain and tie one of the eschmarch that were part of my AFAK. As there is a moment of calm and silence the deafening explosion of a car nearby. I see three British soldiers run and hide behind a parked truck. I feel the hard polymer and stippled grip of my Glock 22 on my waist beacon to me. If I had any chance to use it, it would be now. As I pull out my gun and aim it at the first soldier I see, In the blink of an eye they get incinerated by an explosion. I froze at this sight. I only come to my senses when I see the kid who I previously helped tugging on my arm telling me we have to leave the area.

Chapter 6

I carried the kid back to the abandoned house I was staying at. I laid him on the dining room table so he could lay flat, and I gave him my backpack to use as a pillow for comfort. As the painkiller wore off, he started groaning and wiggling around in pain. Thinking fast, I broke a painkiller in half and gave him the half before I ran into town to find someone who could help heal his wound.

Chapter 7

As I made it to town I looked around and immediately spotted a doctor helping some wounded civilians. I ran over to him asking him "You have to help me, There is a wounded child in the abandoned house on the edge of town, I think he got hit in an artery!" The doctor reluctantly said "What's in it for me?" in astonishment "Are you serious? if you are going to want a bribe the best I can do is some painkillers" The doctor's eyes lit up "That's a good deal, sure I'll help you."

The End

As we make it up the hill to the abandoned house, I feel weary. Each step I take feels like another 20 pounds are added to my shoulders. Then everything goes black. I can't see anything yet I feel myself drop to the ground, the doctor pulling on me asking me to wake up, and the soft grass below me. When I wake up I'm in my bed with birds chirping outside my window. I still wonder to this day if any of that was real and if that boy was okay.

